

I'm not a robot



Fourth step inventory worksheet

The fourth step is very special in the 12-step program. In previous steps, we have admitted our problems and handed our lives to the God of our understanding, our Higher Power. We are told to make "a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves." Sober Speak provides two step 4 inventory worksheets for writing your moral inventory. The fourth step inventory worksheets are a comprehensive and must be completed without holding anything back. They are an honest look at ourselves, from this, we gain a new perspective on who we are and what we need to work on. They also allow us to explore all our character defects. To be effective, an inventory process must be marked by rigorous honesty. We expose ourselves to ourselves with all our negative feelings and character flaws and do that fearlessly. This step aims to set us on the path to emotional sobriety. The other alternative is being a so-called "dry drunk," which is someone sober but whose attitudes and actions remain those of their drinking past. In the fifth step, we will become willing to have God take all of this away and ask for that in the sixth. In the eighth, we made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all. When we finish the ninth, we have made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. This shows how fundamental the fourth step is to the steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Here is a brief fourth-step worksheet guide using the four charts in the Sober Speak Step 4 worksheets. Each chart contains a brief introduction, an example and details the idea behind each column. The Big Book says that resentment is the "number one" offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease. Resentment creates dangerous negative thoughts. They fester like a sore and erupt as anger, bitterness, or melancholy. They are more likely than anything else to cause a relapse. Here, we name a resentment. It does not have to be one word. It could be "Not having the final word." The next column is: This can be anything—a person, an organization, or a company. Think deeply about this. Some objects of resentment are surprising and very unpleasant to admit to, like resenting our children for forcing too much responsibility on us. The next column is: There are so many reasons we can resent things; many will touch on the fears we deal with later. The next column is: Resentments are expressed in attitudes and actions. We make the effect clear. Often, an effect will trigger a memory of harm that we can list. It is safe to say that these four charts do not exist in isolation but feed into each other. The way fear affects us is described as follows: This short word somehow touches on every aspect of our lives. It was an evil and corroding thread; the fabric of our existence was shot through with it. What Do I Fear?Why do I fear it?What Effect Does It Have on Me?How Does it Affect Others?Being aloneBecause it makes me feel as though I have no value,I become morose and demand attention.They try to avoid me which reinforces the loneliness. They become resentful. As alcoholics, fear was a constant companion. Many AA members began their path to addiction by drinking to dispel fear. Here we list each fear we have. This column states the underlying cause or causes of the fear. The next column is: What does this fear do to us? How do we react to it? How does it affect our daily living?The next column is: We are not the only ones affected by our responses to things. The way we respond to our fears affects others as well. Here we state how others react to the effect it has on us. In the example, the reaction to the way the recovering addict used to become depressed ensured that others steered clear of them. We are told that we must be willing to make amends where we have harmed, provided that we do not cause further harm. This part of the fourth step inventory will be used in the eighth step: "Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all." In the 9th, we make direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when doing so would injure them or others. Dealing with these harms is vital to our spiritual growth and to achieving ongoing sobriety. What Harm Did I Do?Who Did I Harm?Why Did I Do This?What Defect Made Me Do It?Lied about my drinkingMy family, My friends! did this to "protect" myself.Selfishness because I wanted to carry on drinking.Pride and not wanting to admit to a problem. This may be the hardest part of this step. Here we list memories of people we have hurt. The next column is: This can range even to what we hurt if we injure an animal. Generally, though, this refers to people, and some people will appear on this list many times and often for different reasons. The next column is: Something spurs us to harm. This is the immediate fight-or-flight response we are noting here. The next column is: This is the deeper level of "Why Did I Do This?" What triggered the negative feelings that caused us to harm another? Each harm stems in some way from negative thoughts. The Big Book tells us to evaluate our sexual activity in this way "We subjected each relation to this test - was it selfish or not?" The sex conduct worksheet deals with matters that society considers too intimate to discuss. The Big Book responds by establishing that "we treat sex as we would any other problem." With Whom?What Happened?How Did We Hurt If We Did?Who Was Hurt?What Defect(s) Affected This?I don't know her name.One night stand after drinking. I bragged to my wife afterward.By being vengefulMy sex partner and my wife.Anger at my wife for commenting about my performance when I was drunk. Insecurity about being adequate Who else was involved in the encounter? Not all the sordid parts, but an overview of how the event transpired. The next column is: Not all sexual encounters were necessarily bad, but if we did hurt someone, we need to state the harm we did. The next column is: List the names of the people who were harmed. This might include yourself more often than you realize. The next column is: W/we didn't harm people for no reason. So, what underlying flaw prompted this action? Step 4 can take a long time. Do not let that put you off. This personal inventory step can be challenging. Focus on the words of the 9th step promises: We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. With each step we take, we can recall this part of a program and a process working toward a spiritual awakening. Steps are related; the fourth step is one part of a sum of critical parts working to improve ourselves. We will revisit this process of assessing how we wronged others daily for the rest of our lives. In this way, the fourth step inventory is like a training event that is harder than the final event. Do not treat it as a sprint and miss things. And do not treat it as a marathon because when it is long, we balk at continuing. The Big Book puts what we have achieved by completing this step very plainly when it says: you have swallowed and digested some big chunks of truth about yourself. At the end of the day, though, we have already started to be honest with ourselves when, back at step one, we admitted we were powerless over alcohol. That was the scariest step of all. Edited on June 1, 2022 These are the original Fourth Step Guides and Work sheets used in the Dallas B., AA Big Book Study, the 4th Step Workshops, and the 12 Step Study Workshops. If you get these 4th Step Worksheets and Guides else — they are likely not the originals and may have been changed or altered. These Guides and Worksheets have been used by thousands of AA's, NA's, Al-Anon's, OA Overeaters's, CA's, GA's and other 12 Step Recovery Program Members that use the 12 Steps as instructed in the book, Alcoholics Anonymous. Get the most out of these A.A. 4th Step Work sheet by taking time to read the INSTRUCTIONS that go with them. Included as a download file, below. There is a difference in an 'AWAKENING' and an 'Understanding.' The 12 Steps are about having a 'Spiritual Awakening' as the result of having 'taken' these 12 Steps. WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT? Knowing, Understanding, and Experiencing are NOT the same. We're fooling ourselves when we think we can understand psychic or spiritual experiences and psychological transformations - BEFORE we've experienced them. UNDERSTANDING comes later — after we've had the experience produced by 'taking' the 12 Steps. For now, take the actions — and see what happens AFTER we have our AWAKENING experience in Step 12. The purpose of taking the 12 Steps — is so that you can experience being comfortable — while sober! Step 4: "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves." NOTE: Scroll down this page for the links to the 5 worksheets that you can download. (About the middle of this page). Click or touch the links and they will open and then save or print a copy. There is much more to sobriety than just being physically sober. There is more to sobriety than having the obsession for alcohol removed. Sober isn't much fun - unless we can find a way to be happy and thriving while sober. And that's what taking the 12 Steps will do for you. To be happy WHILE sober requires emotional sobriety. The Fourth Step is an action step towards PHYSICAL and EMOTIONAL sobriety. We are in a process with the 12 Steps that will transform our thoughts, our attitudes, and move us towards recreating our lives. In Step 3, We made a decision to give up our old plans for living and to try A.A.'s 12 Step Plan for Living. Step Four is a fact-finding and fact-facing process. We are searching for the "causes and conditions" that produced our miserable results in life. We want to discover the attitudes, thoughts, beliefs, fears, actions, behaviors, and the patterns - that have been blocking us, causing us problems and causing our failure. We want to learn the exact nature of our "character defects" and what causes us to do the unacceptable things we do - so that once they are removed - we can acquire and live with new attitudes, thoughts, beliefs, actions and behaviors for our HIGHEST good, and for the HIGHEST good of those with whom we come in contact. This prepares us to live a life of purpose - where we can be in maximum fit condition to be of service to others. Everything contained in the Fourth Step Inventory Worksheets is distilled directly from the book - Alcoholics Anonymous. NEW! Be sure to download ALL SIX WORKSHEETS below: The first one is the 4th Step Guide Instructions page. Read the instructions page first. If you have questions contact Dallas B. here, on this website's contact form — and we will be sure that he gets it! You can also contact Dallas B., on Facebook by visiting the Step12.com page on Facebook, until we restore our forums on this website. 1 The 4th Step Guide Instructions 4th-step-instructions-xDownload 2. The 4th Step - Resentments worksheet. 4th-step-resentments-xDownload 3. The 4th Step - Fear's worksheet 4. The4th Step - Sex Conduct Worksheet. 4th-step-sex-conduct-xDownload 5. The 4th Step Inventory - Harms to Others Worksheet NEW: We've decided to include this page as Download Number Six - which will include links in the PDF files to make it easier for you to access them in the future, and easier for you to pass them on to others - if you desire to do so. 6. This page with links to all the forms, too There is a detailed instruction sheet that goes with the Step 4 Inventory forms, from the workshop. Please read that instruction sheet, follow the instructions, and read all the references in the Big Book mentioned in the instructions, and read the Big Book references on each one of the individual forms. If someone offers you one that you can type your 4th Step Inventory in it — RUN AWAY AS FAST AS YOU CAN! The Big Book SPECIFICALLY instructs us use pen and paper to do this! (There is a huge psychological reason for 'hand writing' rather than 'typing') . NOTE: Is this official A.A. Literature? What is more OFFICIAL — than The Book Alcoholics Anonymous? If you have questions or need additional help — contact us here at Step12.com The Fourth Step of Alcoholics Anonymous requires participants to take a "searching and fearless moral inventory." This working step in the AA Big Book challenges you to explore the character defects that led you to alcohol addiction (or drug addiction in Narcotics Anonymous). The 4th Step inventory process requires you to be completely honest with yourself. The idea is that once you identify all these defects, you can confront and change them in the remainder of the Twelve Steps. At Purpose Healing Center, we recognize the importance of Alcoholics Anonymous as a vital resource. We recommend peer support in the form of SMART Recovery, NA, and AA to our clients after leaving our alcohol addiction treatment centers in Scottsdale and Phoenix. Why? NA and AA meetings support personal responsibility and motivate sobriety, as well as provide a peer support network that understands the challenges and victories to be found in living sober. We encourage you to take our Fourth Step inventory and read on to learn tips to help complete the 4th Step. Our Fourth Step worksheet and these 4th Step inventory prompts are open-ended journal prompts that will ask you to start searching. The questions ask you to pay attention to your inner voice and find the truth hidden deep inside your person. Reflecting on an incident that made you feel ashamed helps you find ways to discover behaviors that don't align with your values. Being honest about yourself helps you make changes as you progress in AA. Example: In recovery, 'Lily' realized that her past sexual conduct was the direct result of recklessness while drinking. Her counselor helped her understand ways to bridge the disconnect between the behavior and the person she wanted to become. Analyzing resentments or anger helps you discover your triggers for drinking. You empower yourself to explore these feelings and learn to release them instead of having an emotional explosion in the future. Example: 'Steven' became angered at random times; his family would often express fear or concern. By working with his AA sponsor and listing his resentments during the moral inventory process, he learned the root cause of his anger was the trauma he had carried since childhood. Writing about how past behaviors connect to relationship problems can show harmful tendencies, like pettiness, hidden resentments, or belittling partners due to alcohol or drug use. Admitting how these behaviors have affected loved ones set you on the best course toward a life of happier relationships. Example: 'Liz' fell in love often and was left quickly. Soon after connecting, she began to control and asked constant questions about each partner's whereabouts. Her therapist discovered a fear of abandonment, causing deep resentments and insecurities. Acknowledging times when you've felt emotionally disconnected can reveal the underlying factors of addiction. Finding ways to reconnect with yourself is essential as you begin the recovery process. Example: 'Pedro' had grown up in a household with a physically and sexually abusive stepfather. He learned to check out to control his pain. While taking his moral inventory, he decided to come to Purpose for trauma recovery. His AA sponsor was great, but he needed professional care to reconnect with his best self. Avoiding accountability comes from a place of complete fear of consequences. When you begin to accept accountability, you increase self-esteem. It also builds integrity and allows you to take responsibility in all facets of life. Example: 'Chantal' always blamed others for her poor life choices, including drinking. By doing the 4th step, she saw how her fear of judgment by others added to her addiction. Her sponsor helped her grow her self-esteem. She now has no fear of telling the story and even shares it with the rest of the world. Download AA 4th Step Inventory Worksheets Being envious of a person, even someone you like, leads to deteriorating relationships. Recognizing this cultivates a more positive mindset as you mend broken fences. Example: 'Tiffany' felt jealous of her best friend, who had tremendous financial advantages. To mask her envy, Tiffany would drink, calling attention away from her better-dressed friend. She admitted to this behavior in the 4th step inventory. Addiction struggles often mean covering up the struggles by any means necessary. People have probably become suspicious or untrusting of you. Committing to honesty is a key stepping stone toward rebuilding trust. Example: 'Samantha' told her girlfriend she'd paid their electricity bill but bought liquor instead. The power company cut off the lights and her girlfriend can't trust her with money. Sam is in recovery and hopes to restore trust. Having fear and anxiety can expose a lack of appropriate coping skills when emotions become imbalanced. It's typical for everyone to experience these emotions but problematic when someone uses substances to overcome them. Example: 'Dan' often felt anxiety but never saw a therapist due to a fear of the stigma. She started to drink to prevent anxiety attacks. With the help of her new counselor, she's sharpening her new coping tools. Holding grudges usually reveals a lack of appropriate coping strategies. It destroys your emotional resilience and shreds your efforts at personal growth. Forgiving promotes healing. Example: 'Jeffrey' never forgave his father for leaving them when he was a child. His AA sponsor helped him see how it damaged his mental health. He wrote him a letter to process his emotions but never sent it. Selfishness distances you from others, which is damaging when you need extra support. Working on the Twelve Steps provides a map of how to repair relationships with family when you must avoid relapse. Example: 'Julia' always put herself first. Her husband felt deprioritized and insisted that she seek treatment. In recovery, Julia realized that selfishness had almost cost her a marriage. She's in couples' counseling with her husband and attends AA meetings in Scottsdale. To begin is one of the most challenging things about taking a searching and fearless moral inventory. It's hard to ignore the program language, which are largely considered outdated. Words like "moral defects" and "alcoholics" can trigger some. However, the program can facilitate spiritual growth and support better relationships. However, the program founders didn't have modern science in 1935. Since then, medical and mental health professionals have acknowledged that Alcohol Use Disorder is a disease, not a moral failing. So, regardless of your negative thoughts about the verbiage of Alcoholics Anonymous, don't skip any AA Step. Each step contributes to a sobriety-supporting spiritual awakening. Have you sincerely completed the first three Steps of AA? Sometimes, the first attempt at any Step may bear repeating. In the First Step of the AA Big Book, you acknowledged your powerlessness over alcohol and admitted that your life had become unmanageable. You humbled yourself and told the truth - that you need guidance to heal. Step Two of AA awakened you to the idea of a Higher Power greater than you. You came to understand that you must free yourself from desire-based, poor decisions and accept assistance from God, your sponsor, and the AA community. After checking off the work in the first two columns, Step Three of the AA Big Book asked you to turn your life over to the Higher Power. This Step was about surrender and trust, allowing you to accept guidance instead of chasing ambitions. It showed your commitment to recovery and lets God remove your self-imposed roadblocks. The Fourth Step, taking a moral inventory, leads you to self-discovery by examining your past conduct before you decide to stop drinking. It includes such negative emotions as resentments and fears. You start understanding how your alcohol abuse has impacted personal relationships and your self-esteem. Seeking to identify the exact nature of your negative feelings, you also start understanding how alcohol has been the cause of certain behaviors. Examples of this can include inappropriate sexual conduct or keeping secrets from loved ones. This information will aid later in the recovery process when you start making direct amends to such people as those you've hurt. Some people find AA is enough for their recovery needs. Others find that completing the 4th step inventory, or the general AA process itself, lacks the structure and support needed for long-lasting recovery. If you fall into this second category, you have no reason for fear or shame. We assist clients in achieving recovery success through the 12 Steps, as well as help find other alternatives for those who struggle with the Anonymous model. Purpose Healing Center is Joint Commission certified and can offer you all the tools you need to hit the reset button on your life. Call us today with any questions or concerns. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. Al-Anon members worldwide have worked this step, taking an in-depth inventory for the first time using thought-provoking questions or the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book, among other methods. The key to the fourth step is simple: you just do it. Your sponsor or step study group will tell you how to complete it using the 4th step worksheets, the Al-Anon Blue Print, or other inventory worksheets. You can even write your inventory journal style in a regular spiral-bound notebook. Although the step says we take a "fearless" inventory, for many of us, it's not fearless. It can be scary. Be kind to yourself during this time. For many, the fourth step brings peace and calm unlike anything we have ever felt. Knowing our character defects helps us understand who we are and lets us continue on our incredible journey of self-knowledge. To begin your fourth step, find a quiet place where you can concentrate and have an open mind. It is important to have a support system during the fourth step. Be it a sponsor, step study group, or a close friend, you'll need someone to lean on during this time. There are a few ways to begin your honest inventory. You can begin by praying to your Higher Power, calling a friend and praying together, going for a short walk and listening to soft music, lighting a candle, and meditating. Do whatever is needed to clear your mind. You can pray the Fourth Step Prayer: God, please help me to honestly take stock. Help me to search out the flaws in my make-up which caused my failure. Help me to see where resentment has plagued me and resulted in spiritual malady, but more importantly help me to understand my part in these resentments. Help me to resolutely look for my own mistakes and to understand where I had been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened. Please help me to be searching and fearless in my endeavor to write my inventory. Another Fourth Step Prayer: God, Please help me to be free of anger and to see that the world and its people have dominated me. Show me that the wrong-doing of others, fancied or real, has the power actually to kill me. Help me to master my resentments by understanding that the people who wronged me were perhaps spiritually sick. Please help me show those I resent the same Tolerance, Pity, and Patience that I would cheerfully grant a sick friend.** Help me to see that this is a sick person. Higher Power, please show me how I can be helpful to them and save me from being angry. Higher Power, help me to avoid retaliation or argument. I know I can't be helpful to everyone, but at least show me how to take a kindly and tolerant view of everyone. Thy will be done. One of the most important things to remember when writing your inventory is not to hold back. This is your chance to get everything out in the open. We are only as sick as our secrets. We don't want to keep anything in because those secrets drive us to stay sick. We all think we're the ONLY person on earth that has done something. I'm here to tell you it's not true. IT IS NOT TRUE. Please do not hold anything back. The only way to get sober is to get everything out in the open. Al-Anon offers a few tools for the fourth step. Blueprint for Progress—This small booklet you can order from the Al-Anon website. Many Al-Anon members use it to begin their inventory and measure their growth. Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions - Study guide with in-depth chapters on each Step, with additional sections on each Tradition and Concept of Service that provide insight. Includes thought-provoking questions. Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book - 12-step program recovery process way of working the 4th step Alateen Fourth Step Inventory workbook - In 1989, Alateen completed this workbook, used in both Al-anon and Alateen. This workbook encourages you to draw a picture of the defective characteristic. You can order the above books from the Al-Anon Family Groups website Bookstore. Used books in fairly good resalable condition may also be found in bookstores. In Step One, we learned the three C's. We didn't cause the disease of alcoholism, we can't control it and we can't cure it. In the fourth step, there is an option to create four columns and write your fourth step using a table. Additionally, we acquired an awareness of how we contributed to the disease through our actions. Column 1: Did I cause the problem? Column 2: How have I tried to control it? Column 3: Is it in my power to cure it? Column 4: Did this action contribute to it? A longtime member shared that she heard in her recovery that members share in coping with the disease of alcoholism-related to the four Ms: Martyrdom, Managing, Manipulating, and Mothering. This member wrote her fourth step using the four M's, writing out situations, persons and events that she wanted to examine closely. She wrote a brief paragraph about each one and a sentence or two on how she wanted to do things differently and how she was going to apply the Al-Anon principles. Her Fourth Step experience provided her with a newfound freedom and she now believes that she is a good person with values. Most important, she feels respected. As with any writing exercise, working with a sponsor or an Al-anon member who has worked on this step is vital. They can answer questions since they understand how a personal inventory works. You can also find an Al-Anon meeting that may have a step study group. A step study group works the twelve steps together using a common book or tool and comes together weekly to share their experience with that week's step. Living with alcohol addiction for years can destroy our self-esteem. Family members shatter our good qualities with destructive behaviors like pointing out our shortcomings daily. This may place us in fear of writing an inventory. This is why we include our character assets in our inventory. We include the good things we have done in our lives in our inventory. Although some may say otherwise, the fourth step does not have to take a long time. It is a spiritual step, and members of any age complete it. Alateen's 4th step inventory is identical to AA's and Al-alanon's. We can feel good about having completed this spiritual and personal journey. Once we have all that information organized and ready to share however we choose, we feel free. We might discover new things about ourselves and perceive ourselves differently. We may gain insight into our behavior and personalities. We can identify our own mistakes and work towards being better community members. What happens if you start the 4th step and get stuck with feelings of fear or confusion? It's okay. Go to an Al-Anon meeting, talk to your sponsor, and put a note on your calendar for a day and time to finish the 4th step. We want our fourth step to take an honest look at ourselves and go at our own pace. This step is intended to remove negative thoughts from our minds and improve our emotional well-being. After writing for long periods, we can get tired and weary. Be easy on yourself, take breaks, and take care of yourself during this process. Download this worksheet for your Al-Anon 4th step. Print multiple copies to inventory your Fears, Harms, Resentments, and Sex Conduct. See below for a list of character assets/flaws pulled from Paths of Recovery. Acceptance of what cannot be changed Acceptance that others are different Acceptance that others' needs are different than mine Acting responsibly Admitting mistakes Agreeability Being clear and concise in expression Being dependable Being organised Consideration Courtesy Creating a pleasant environment Doing what I promised when I promised it Eating healthily Empathy with others Financial prudence and budgeting Financial responsibility (paying bills on time) Following a Higher Power's guidance Fostering artistic or other talents Fulfillment of commitments Generosity (including in Al-Anon) Gratitude Helpfulness Honesty Humility Kind thoughts toward others Kind thoughts towards myself Listening Mentally turning things over to a Higher Power Obeying the law Offering help when it is asked for Openness to others' views Optimism Patience with myself Pointing out the good in others Prayer and meditation Seeing the good in others Seeking a Higher Power's guidance Seeking guidance from others Spotting opportunities for service Taking all of the actions of the program to remain well Taking care of medical problems Taking care of physical appearance Taking care of physical things (one's own and others) Taking each action to the best of my ability Taking exercise Tolerance Trustworthiness Volunteering for service in Al-Anon Doing for others what they can and should do for themselves Feeling responsible for what is beyond my control Getting upset when I don't get my way Holding others to excessively high standards Holding ourselves to excessively high standards Inappropriate secrecy Lying to avoid tension or conflict Manipulation (using covert means to get my way) Martyrdom Mental judgment of others Not removing myself from dangerous or otherwise harmful situations Self-pity Taking on responsibilities that are not mine Try to fix things that are none of my business Trying to be in charge when it is not appropriate Voiced criticism